



# *Superior Court of California*

COUNTY OF VENTURA  
Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

***Michael D. Planet***  
*Executive Officer/Clerk  
and Jury Commissioner*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: December 11, 2003

Contact: Robert Sherman  
Deputy Executive Officer  
(805) 654-2964

## **VENTURA SUPERIOR COURT RECEIVES AWARD FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM**

The Ventura Superior Court's "Tip of the Day" radio program has been selected as a recipient of the Ralph N. Kleps Award for Improvement in Administration of the Courts. The award recognizes innovation in the courts and is presented annually by the California Judicial Council, the policymaking body for the state's courts.

Tip of the Day was one of 10 exemplary programs selected by the council from a field of 38 nominations. The awards will be presented at the California Judicial Administration Conference next February.

Tip of the Day is a program of Spanish-language public service radio announcements that was initiated in mid-2002 as a form of community outreach for the court's no-cost Self-Help Legal Access Centers. Announcements lasting approximately five minutes are made live in Spanish Monday through Friday at 10:30 a.m. on KOXR radio station.

Topics are chosen from questions that have previously been raised by people seeking help at the center. Each tip is intended to provide general information to the community while also informing citizens of the wide range of services and programs offered by the court.

Previous programs have included information on landlord and eviction issues, restraining orders, child custody and support, contracts, driver's licenses, automobile insurance, child safety seats, bad checks, and vehicle accidents. Other

tips focus on the court's programs and services, such as its Self-Help Centers, the Children's Waiting Room, assistance with family related matters, the availability of interpreters, and its web site.

Since the program was implemented, the number of people seeking assistance at the Self-Help Legal Access Center in the predominately Spanish-speaking La Colonia neighborhood of Oxnard has more than doubled. Many have noted that they became aware of the center's existence due to the "Tip of the Day" radio program.

The Kleps Award was created in 1991 in honor of the first administrative director of the California Courts. Programs nominated for the award are judged on innovation, the ability to be replicated in other courts, and their reflection of the intent of at least one of the Judicial Council's Long-Range Strategic Plan goals. Those goals include Access, Fairness and Diversity; Independence and Accountability; Modernization; Quality of Justice and Service to the Public; Education; and Technology.

Earlier this year, the "Tip of the Day" radio program was the recipient of an award from the State Information Officers Council (SiOC) recognizing excellence in state government communications. SiOC is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing support, education, information, networking, and other opportunities to the public information, communication, editorial and publication professionals in California state service.

The Ventura Superior Court began its Self-Help Legal Access Center program in January 1998. It was one of the first courts in the state to have such a program. The center's target population is primarily low-to-moderate income individuals and families for whom retaining a private lawyer is not economically feasible. Almost half of the people seeking help at the centers report a monthly income of less than \$1,000.

Litigants are provided educational materials and one-on-one assistance in most areas of civil law, traffic citations and minor criminal matters so that they can better navigate the court system and understand the justice process. Referrals are also made to other resources, including low cost or free legal service, housing shelters, substance abuse treatment programs, domestic violence programs and job placement programs.

# # #